The Interspecies Newsletter

Fall 1990

Published quarterly by Interspecies Communication Inc.

The Wild Bunch

With the publication of Jim Nollman's new book, *Spiritual Ecology*, (Bantam 1990), and a rave about IC in John Robbins' best seller, *Diet for a new America* the IC mailbox has suddenly become inundated with requests from people seeking ways to tap into our various programs. Most want a sample newsletter. Others seek employment. Some want college credit or ideas for school projects. Still others ask to visit, browse our library, and perhaps soak up the atmosphere.

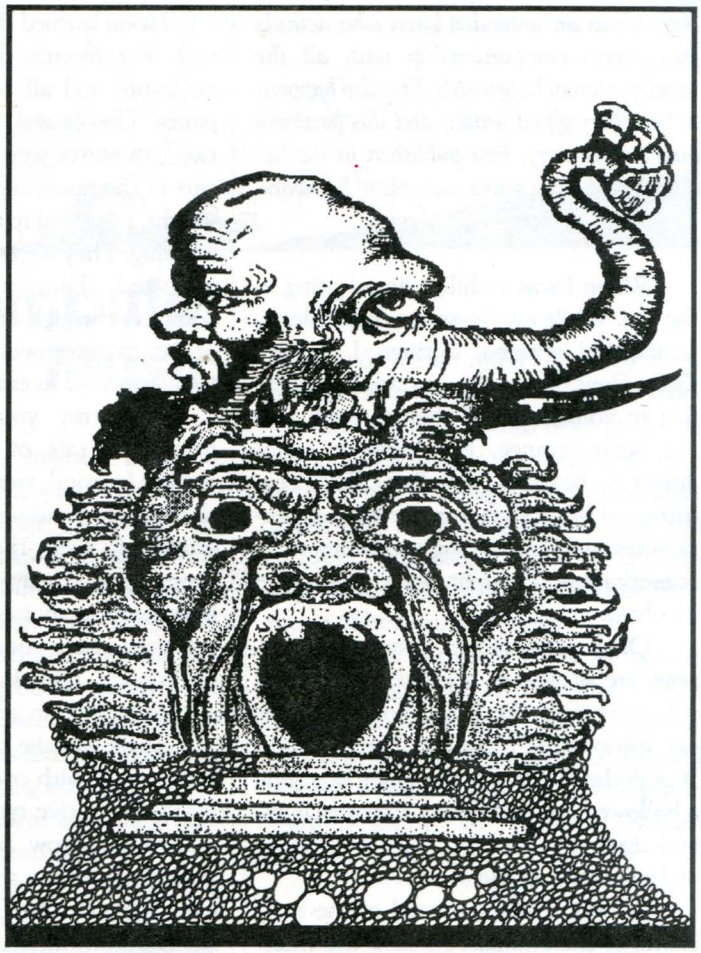
To answer one such query: IC offers no jobs. To those among you who ask for one, we challenge you to create your own job in the field of interspecies communication. And if you do that, and it meshes with what we're doing here, then welcome aboard!

To answer another question: yes, we struggle with subsidizing a growing office, with producing an influential newsletter, with finding the right chemistry of people and budget to create productive field projects. Magic and intuition seem to play a large part in manifesting the successful projects. Keeping in mind long-term goals over momentary dazzle also insures success. Funding flows with right intention.

We choose to keep it small. Our office supports one ¾-time editor/correspondent, a part-time book keeper, an occasional project manager, and a newly appointed development officer.

The field projects are staffed mostly by volunteers who have something specific to provide—skills such as skippering a big boat, leading dream (or drumming) sessions, producing a wilderness council, maintaining the kayaks, cooking for 20, filling the budget, chanting Buddhist mantras to the orcas, or, in one recent case, helping us maintain a peaceful relationship with feisty polar bears. To answer all the budding whale biologists who write us so often: in general, we take no notes, keep no statistics, pay no salaries, and leave few footprints. We are not scientists. Someone once called us half scientists. The other half defines an art and a spirit that communes with nature.

Many many people have donated their ideas and their labor to keep this organization both vibrant and free-spirited. As a small measure of thanks to these angels, this issue of the Interspecies Newsletter contains stories, cartoons, profiles, artwork, projects, by and about the people who are busy contributing to the vision of IC *at the present moment.* Read on, and you're bound to find some very talented people.



On a lesser note, this newsletter also contains a purging of some unused interspecies blurbs that have collected in our files over the past year. For example, take this modern koan lifted from a question and answer session with John McCosker, director of San Francisco's Steinhardt Aquarium:

Q: Does nature make noises just to be noisy?

A: Unlike humans, nature only makes noise for a reason.

Or another, from Milenko Matanovic:'s *Meandering Rivers and Square Tomatoes*, (Morningtown Press, Suite 2166/1420 NW Gilman, Issaquah, WA 98027):

"Why are new housing developments named for what they have destroyed? Do you see any oaks at the "Oak Grove Condominiums"; any eagles at "Eagles Nest". The names are tombstones, not the living reality."

Cougar Love

by Constance Perenyi

Constance, from Seattle, has been providing illustrations for the Interspecies Newsletter for nearly two years. She also volunteers a significant amount of her free time to cleaning seabirds at the oil spills occurring too frequently around the Northwest Coast. She has recently finished a childrens book about an untended lawn who actively encourages companionship with all the rapidly-encroaching weeds. She also happens to be a very gifted writer, and this pertinent interspecies story, first published in the Seattle Weekly, is a prime example of her work.

When I was a child I hated going to the zoo. While my classmates breathlessly anticipated seasonal outings, I dreaded them. Considering this, my adult choices, first to volunteer and then to work at a zoo, seem strange. Nevertheless, I was drawn to Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo. Intrigued by its shift to more humane enclosures and its evolving commitment to conservation, I sought ways to become involved.

Of all my memories from those years, none are as clear as my first venture as a volunteer into the feline house. A true cat aficionado, I floated like Alice in Wonderland through the inner sanctum, a hallowed hall with snow leopards, lions, and tigers on one side, ocelots, caracals, and sand cats on the other.

At first, I was attracted to the most exotic of the animals. I joined the International Snow Leopard Trust and fell in with a small circle of observers who brave winter weather to watch the great furred ones during breeding season. At the time, it felt like love, very privileged love.

But remarkable as they were, the snows stayed aloof. I watched them, diligently recorded their movements, and walked away. By then, I had cultivated a reverent respect for all the inhabitants of the feline house. As I cleared cages and helped keepers at feeding time, I kept my distance and went about my volunteer business in a state of dreamy awe. Still, I wanted more contact with the wild cats.

And that was what I got, from an unlikely quarter. One morning as I ambled past the cougar holding area, I was greeted by a deep, rumbling purr. In disbelief, I recited feline classification: genus *Panthera* (including lions and tigers) roars but doesn't purr; genus *Felis*, cougar included, does indeed purr. But why was this imposing creature purring at me? Was this a trick? Did she intend to deceive me, or worse yet, break my heart with false promises?

I soon learned that the promises were real. For months I had scrubbed this enclosure and all but ignored its occupants. The cougar who purred and her two cagemates were the least glamorous cats in the house. All were old and overweight, relegated to a dismal corner of the building. They weren't spotted, striped, or imported. They were American and common through and through, the kind of cat that on occasion wanders into a suburban yard to eat a poodle.

From my youth in Colorado, I recalled a raft of unflattering cougar stories. In rural areas, ranchers consider the big cats a nuisance; only recently and grudgingly have the bounties on them been lifted. Today, trophy hunters pay large sums to fly into remote Southwestern sites where cougars have been treed by hounds. One bullet, and the puma spends eternity in a paneled den.

These are the pockmarks of human interactions with co-predators. And once again, the native type gets shortchanged. Americans know and care more about Bengal tigers than about their own largest cats. *Felis concolor* fades into shadows at the zoo as in the wild.

But this one specimen demanded my full attention. First it was the purr, then an invitation to touch. Before getting too friendly, I looked into her background and learned that she had arrived at the zoo in 1968 as a cub. She was named Bonnie; a keeper named Gordy Swanberg had hand-raised her at home.

In time, Bonnie had her own cubs and became one of the first cats to receive an experimental birth-control implant. These were the facts on file; more important to me was one handwritten note in her records that understated, "very friendly to people".

As a zoological educator, I had quickly learned the cardinal rule of zoo work: never anthropomorphize the animals, never interpret their behavior in human terms. But as a volunteer, I quietly but fervently believed Bonnie and I were becoming friends. Sometimes I felt torn by these two contrary notions, but when I read *The Ghost Walker*, by RD Lawrence, I knew I kept good company. As a preface to his field studies of cougars, Lawrence relates his encounters with one at London's Regent Park Zoo. His experiences mirrored mine almost exactly.

I knew Lawrence would understand my attraction to Bonnie, as she enticed me closer to her enclosure. Gingerly at first, but with growing confidence and familiarity as time went on, I spread my fingers through the narrow slots in the grating to rub her neck and ears. She responded with eager purrs.

More than once I imagined going into the enclosure with Bonnie. But as they should, such thoughts remained fantasies. I never tested the limits, never presumed upon the safety I believed I would enjoy at close quarters. Even though she recognized my voice and rolled flirtatiously on her back just out of reach, she was still a wild cat, and a large one. Our relationship thrived despite the barriers.

For three years after I left employment at Woodland Park, I continued to

visit Bonnie. Ever the docent, I spent hours on the public side of the enclosure, telling zoo visitors about cougars. What most people saw was a large, matted, broken-down cat; what I saw was an indomitable character, confined by years of crowds and cages, but still more at ease with humans than I am myself. Spectator response to her varied from indifference to jeers to pity. She certainly was not the defiant, screaming wildcat of legend—but her tolerance of the situation was not born of resignation, either. I think she simply made the best of it, with as much dignity and serenity as she could preserve.

Bonnie died in her sleep at the end of May. The average life expectancy of captive cougars is pegged at ten years; she more than doubled that span, but her last year was one of increasing discomfort and fatigue. When a friend called to tell me of her death, I responded with an odd sigh of relief. In my last visits I wanted to shield Bonnie from the public's probing eye, to guarantee her the company of people who knew her condition and still respected her cougarness.

Bonnie was the last of generation of hand-raised cats in the feline unit. In her lifetime, zoos began to change and so did theories of animal management. The pandering bears of old rarely wave from their pits today; their generation of zoo animals, raised and schooled to a very different relationship with humans, has nearly passed. The move is now on to emulate nature; now we peer into man-made habitats and pretend to see wild and free animals at home on the range.

But none of this is natural. By the time I left Woodland Park in 1986, I wondered if these improvements actually benefited captive creatures or merely eased human consciences. So I have come full circle, again feeling uncomfortable with the idea of captivity, but aware of how much I owe to barred cages. Although I may never see cougars in the wild, I am now content to ask them to live in my imagination than in a state of suspended animation at a zoo. I treasure my memories of Bonnie; for animals like her, I wish the undisturbed solitude of high, rocky places, which is, after all, their birthright. Try as we may, we can never duplicate that.

Computer Music

New to IC is a migrant from Los Angeles, Tom Rebold, who has taken a one year sabbatical from his work at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory to spend time exploring the possibilities of analysing cetacean vocalizations with computers. Tom's background includes the past three years working on ground receivers for NASA's two deep space probes Voyager and Galileo. He hopes that his experience in both signal processing and chaos theory will provide some insight into patterns of marine mammal communications.

As a first step, Tom will be working on a computer program to translate various audio recordings of humpback, orca, and dolphin sounds into more idiomatic formats, especially traditional sheet music. This is an idea he picked up in conversation with Roger Payne, the biologist who discovered humpback whale songs. Roger has detected a rhyme scheme in humpback songs — successive musical phrases ending with the same flourish. The sheet music may allow interested people — including musicians, scientists and scholars — to study the rhyme and rhythm of these songs and their evolution over time.

Applying this program to the many cassette tapes that IC has produced with orcas and human musicians, may reveal new details about our own free-form musical dialogue. IC has been producing tapes of this unique interface, and on an annual basis, ever since we started interacting with the same group of orcas back in 1976. Keep tuned. Hopefully, a future issue of this newsletter will feature sheet music of human/orca songs.

Tom is currently based in Seattle, and is using a special computer system developed to study communications within groups of dolphins in a National Science Foundation Project managed by another former IC engineer, Richard Ferraro.

Elephant Wellbeing

An elephant calf from a herd being chased by government forest workers fell down a 23 foot deep well at a remote village in India recently. When the villagers kept the foresters from rescuing her, the herd, 50 strong, trashed huts until they finally relented.

from Animal's Agenda, May 1989

Communing with Nature

The Fabric of Balance

By Michael J. Cohen, Ed.D.

Mike Cohen is a neighbor as well as an author; an ecologist, and a valued advisor to IC. Perhaps better than anyone else we know, he is able to mobilize his own large ideas about spiritual ecology to affect real change on the local level. Mike has published widely about reconnecting our perceptions to nature, which is, of course, a subject dear to all of us here at IC. But whereas IC tends to focus on the more traditional senses of hearing and sight, Mike argues a strong case for recognizing just about as many senses as Heinz makes soups. Here, he offers us a lesson in thirst as a path leading to balance. Mike chairs the Integrated Ecology Department of World Peace University where multi-sensual nature training is offered internationally. He is the author of Connecting With Nature and How Nature Works. Each is available ($11.00) from the University at Box 10869, Eugene OR 97440.

A new discipline, Integrated Ecology, bases itself on evidence strongly suggesting Planet Earth is a global living organism, not a spaceship. It recognizes that Earth organizes, perpetuates, and regenerates itself; and only living organisms do that.

Organism Earth's life system intercommunicates through at least 53 sense groups which pervade the natural world. At our birth and before we contain not just five senses, but as many as 53. Unexercised in our upbringing, some of them die, yet many remain subdued but alive.

Integrated Ecology energizes senses. It enables people to know themselves as part of Earth and Nature's flow. Take water as an example: As it does in all organisms, water from Organism Earth flows into our personal being, through us and out of us. But, neither an excess nor shortage of water enters or leaves us. We are neither bloated nor dehydrated, for sensitive balancing regulators guide water through us.

Water exemplifies our total ecology. Like water, the natural environment sensitively flows in and through us. Every few years over 95% of our body is replaced molecule by molecule, atom by atom by new molecules and atoms from our natural surroundings; not too many, not too few, just the right amount for our lives to flourish and global life to continue flowing. Every seven years or so we are completely replaced by Organism Earth. It becomes us, we become it. We might define death as a time when the flow stops, when we *become* the natural world.

A prime regulator of water's flow through us is our sense of thirst. Surprised? Don't be. We often don't validate our sense of thirst or our many other natural senses and feelings because:

- they are not materials. To our materialistic outlooks they are immaterial.
- they are Nature. People did not invent thirst or any other sense. Nature created them and Nature is the enemy to be conquered. Most of our four letter swear words are Nature.
- they interfere with our dominion. We don't control thirst, it controls us. We don't validate natural senses, we toilet train them.

Senses however, are life. Reasoning is a sense, but contrary to Descarte's "I think, therefore I am", we also each know we exist through our other senses and feelings as well. "I feel, therefore I am" makes perfect sense if you don't demean senses. Validate your personal experience! Who or what would you be without other sensations or feelings? A machine? A book? Inhuman?

Our society neglects to teach, that for sentient beings, the feeling of thirst is as much a part of water as is wetness. We seldom learn that the global life community manifests thirst feelings to help keep Organism Earth's waters flowing for its survival as well as our own. Our thirst is the water of the Planet expressing its need to flow. Through thirst feelings a newborn infant knows of water's existence before he or she ever drinks it.

Thirst self-regulates. It not only tells us to drink the Planet's water, but

quenched thirst feelings tell us when to stop drinking. When you feel thirsty, you sense the natural world nurturing itself in and through you. You also sense Nature's seemingly magical balance.

Thirst is like each of the 52 other natural senses. Each connects, communes, regulates and balances.

Nature's many senses create a global symphony. For example, the sense of excretion delicately counterpoints the sense of thirst. Excretion feelings signal that we contain excess water, that the natural world needs us to excrete water. Our excretions are food for other beings just as the water we drink is an excretion of plant and animal respiration. That's Nature's balanced way, a wild sensitive perfection that shares and treasures everything thereby producing neither pollution nor garbage.

Because modern bias demeans natural senses and feelings as immaterial — as subjective, unscientific, childish sentimentality — we seldom recognize their vital ecological role. Yet the Planet creates balance through a congress of 53 senses like thirst, sight, excretion, hunger, place, community, color, trust, electromagnetism, joy, rationality, nurturing, procreation, reasoning, language, season, superorganism, space... Each of these senses are vital interglobal, interspecies communicators. Knowing Earth through only a few of them is like seeing a rainbow in black and white. We lose much of its worth.

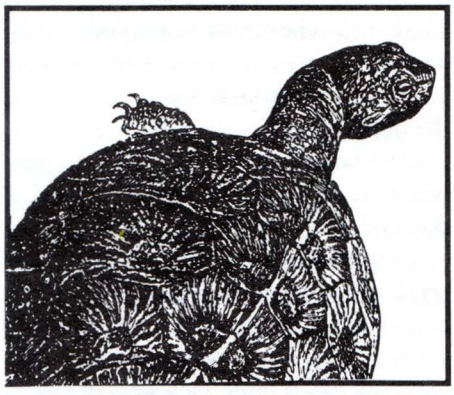
How much better our lives would be today if these inborn senses were active

enough to control our destructive conquest of Nature within and without. Inborn senses balance a beaver's technological house and dam building efforts as well as its number of offspring. When strengthened in us, they balance our activities and inclinations too.

Our excessive unbalanced emotional and substance dependencies (including "natural resource" substances such as trees, soil and oil) result from our attempts to either rejuvenate our lost sensations, or to soothe our pain.

We mostly live our daily lives in less than 12 natural senses. Our greatest problem, greed, is nothing more than some of our natural senses not being balanced by senses subdued during our upbringing. History shows that we can't successfully live by our rationality and language senses alone. Our runaway technology, pollution and violence is senseless. It's nonsense because it's disconnected from Nature's wise, guiding congress of senses.

The proven remedy for this hurtful disconnectedness, which, of course leads to environmental irresponsibility, is to reconnect directly with the natural world. To this end, Integrated Ecology enables us to ground our feelings in Organism Earth's monumental stability, balance and wisdom which many responsible people(s) consider sacred. We discover that we don't exclusively own our feelings because they are also Earth's voice. People who hear this voice rarely produce the stress, pollution and violence found throughout modern life. Instead, they rejoin Nature within and without, enabling us to know Earth and each other by how good a balanced life feels.



Blessing the Algae

The summer of 1988 greeted residents of these United States with polluted beaches, soaring temperatures and devastating drought. As Mike Cohen has just pointed out, it was a time to learn how to reconnect with the voice of nature. But how do you do that, if you live in New York City? One possible answer came from the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, where, in September, 1988. they held a special blessing for the algae.

The algae—10 billion of them contained in a flask labeled *Anabaena Flosaqua*—were carried into the cathedral in a procession that also included an elephant, a dromedary, a llama, a fish, a python, an eagle, a tortoise, a raccoon, and a turkey. Bringing up the rear was a 14 foot tall gingko tree, its roots wrapped in burlap. About 4,000 people stood and cheered as the Episcopal Bishop, Paul Moore, blessed all the creatures great and small.

The New York Times called it a spectacle. A few hardcore environmentalists bemoaned the fact that animals do not need to be in churches and that the church, itself—huge manmade edifice that it is—showed no more sensitivity to the essence of the animals than, say, the Woodland Park Zoo's caged relationship to the cougar, Bonnie. The issue, as it has come to be articulated so often, is whether or not any animal can be stripped of its natural habitat and still retain its integrity. It's a tricky business, and deciding how one feels about it must, ultimately, bring into question one's own beliefs about such concepts as anthropocentrism, animal sentience, tameness, and the limits to captivity.

Mary Bloom, the coordinator of the event, offered one possible answer. She said that she chose animals "who were good ambassadors of their species". For example, the turtle was purchased in Chinatown from a barrel where it was being sold for eventual use in soup. After the blessing, the boy who bought it, said he planned to release it in upstate New York.

Captain Wilderness

Photographer, Jerry Pavia, called up the IC office last Spring saying he had a few projects he wanted to do through the auspices of IC. He also volunteered his prodigious skills as a fundraiser. Among other claims to fame, Jerry is the only person Ive ever met, who has a cartoon character based on himself. This alter ego, Captain Wilderness, appears regularly in the newspaper of the Idaho Conservation League. Like Jerry, himself, Captain Wilderness is a good-natured, non-sequitur of a character capable of making real change occur in the protection of wildernesss. Here's his first public statement as ICs new development officer.

Before coming to Friday Harbor recently, I spent the last 14 years in Idaho, very involved in wilderness issues, especially forest management. I bring to IC experience as an artist who makes his living by photographing nature, and as a lobbyist and fundraiser who represented the Idaho Conservation league (and the Northern Rockies) in Washington DC.

My concern now is that there is an ever-widening gap between our leaders based in Washington DC, and those grassroots people who live and work close to nature. In my opinion, these leader's, both political and environmental, have lost touch with their own soul connection to nature. I thus bring to IC, next summer's:

Wilderness Community Project

This project is a formal attempt to bridge that gap by inviting some of those leaders to a wilderness setting, to spend a week with a group of artists and visionaries. But this is not a summer camp for grown-ups, and scheduled 'activities' will be kept to a minimum. Invitations have been sent out, and we've already received a few confirmations. I come to this project with no answers. But I do have questions that revolve around how we, as a species, (and myself as an individual) relate to nature. I hope that my involvement with IC brings me closer to answering some of these questions.

An excerpt from:

The Dolphin War

by Jim Nollman

Does the savvy editor describe his own activities in the first or the third person? At the beginning of this newsletter I chose the latter. Now I fall upon the former to mention that I am deeply-immersed in writing a novel based upon ICs 1980 project to get fishermen to stop killing dolphins in rural Japan. Because the unfinished manuscript seems to offer the kind of speculation about cetacean consciousness that usually interests ICs members, it seemed pertinent to excerpt one small bit of it as my own personal contribution to this newsletter about the current activities of people involved in IC. Herein, is a description of a dolphin (pseudorca) stranding in a little bay known as the Killing Cove.

The pseudorcas pause a moment to surmise the galvanized hurricane fence that defines the outer border of the killing cove. Some of the animals echolocate against the steel mesh, focusing a staccato burst of clicks through the acoustic lens located inside their bulbous foreheads. This machine-gun burst of clicks strikes against the weblike surface of the fence and then bounces back in the form of an echo to be "heard" by the resonators built into pseudorca's lower jaw. This echo is quickly analysed by the huge brain. So, the pseudorcas discover an inflexible, ringing substance — not entirely unlike a crystalline rock — but possessed of acoustic properties quite unlike anything else in their experience. The steel is so utterly opaque. Yet it rings as if possessed of its own voice!

Finally, this echo that had described the fence in such detail (and which needs to be distinguished from the *original* clicks), is now vocalized from whale to whale as a kind of holophonic ideogram. Here is an echo unlike anything else in their vocabulary.

Echolocation is a dolphin's primary sense mechanism. And, of course, echoes are a temporal phenomenon. Thus, any pseudorca's acoustic rendering of the fence not only embraces the standard three-dimensions as perceived by the human senses, but also incorporates a harmonic resonance which might best be described as embodying the fourth dimension of time. It makes one speculate if Einstein's four-dimensional mathematics might easily be comprehended and then expanded upon by any cetacean. Except, the so-called "abstract concepts" would not be "understood" as intellectual constructs and then rendered "real" by the quantitative language of mathematics. Instead, a pseudorca "feels" relativity just as it feels the echoes that describe the rest of its perceptual universe. It is not unlike a human child learning to visualize relativity by uptilting his face into an April cloudburst.

The pseudorcas pause a moment, determine that the fence can not cause them immediate harm, and then, one at a time, swim through the ringing portals of the gate into the Killing Cove. They swim until they feel the white sandy bottom, then stop and commence to float on the surface of the lagoon. They back up a few more feet into slightly deeper water and turn towards one another; ten bodies emanating from a common center like the petals of a jet-black daisy. The eldest animal, an old male nearly twenty feet in length, commences a quiet glissando which sounds not unlike a clarinet sliding up and down a minor scale in the key of D. The glissando is immediately repeated and chorused by all together.

Some animals resonate the overtones, others accentuate the tonic. In total, the chorus works as a calming influence, acoustic community meditation, dolphin yoga. The sound shimmers off their skin, resonates along the length of each animal's body out to the very tips of the flukes where it is retained a moment, flips across the two tips and then rolls back out towards their heads again. Each animal relaxes into the sound, vocalizing, singing out clearly to tune their own body with the other nine. Then, all together, another breath, and another glissando.

Suddenly, the notes issuing from each individual undergo a subtle shift which transmutes the singing into a musical/sculptural matrix unique to cetaceans. This second burst harmonizes not only the sounds emanating from each animal, but simultaneously harmonizes the *echoes* conjured by the daisy shape, itself. In effect, it amplifies and focuses the daisy into a living musical instrument that evinces both the geometry and the skin texture of the pod.

Finally, the animals enter a cetacean's version of a group trance. Perhaps this disposition is best described as dreaming through the skin. Paradoxically, those individualized shapes, minds, textures, and attitudes now seem to vanish altogether. Because this sound is also physical – a wave – it serves to massage each animal, soothing the tension while further integrating the *individual* skin dreaming into a *group* skin dreaming. In effect, the transience of each individual existence reifies as a group sound, which in turn reifies back again as their resonating echo presence. It both defines and informs their pod-ness. The mystical vibration made mundane.

There's also a practicality to this act of skin dreaming. The massaging effect soon activates enzymes that prepare their bodies to deal with the unbearable stress of stranding. Muscles relax, certain internal organs harden in order to withstand the painful weight soon to be pressing against each of them.

Finally the pseudorcas break from the circle one at a time and slip backwards into deeper water. Their breathing deepens, their minds become one-pointed. Then, as if commencing a food-gathering dive into the abyss, each animal takes a deep breath and holds it. Five minutes. The beach. It seems a veritable supplement to their own bodies. Ten minutes. The beach is drawing them forward. The beach. The air. Almost too suddenly, one at a time, each animal surges forward until its momentum is finally inhibited by the impenetrable mass of the beach. Motionless now. Exhale once. Exhale a second time and then inhale. The deed is done. The pod has stranded.

Instantly, new sensations vie for attention. The imponderable pull of gravity enacts its burden, jamming innards tightly against the spinal column. Worse still, any cetacean is quite incapable of sweat-

ing. The animals quickly turn feverish. The skin, that exquisitely sensitive jet black skin immediately starts to harden, shrink, and then, finally, crack under the glare of the late afternoon sun. The animals are squeezed from every direction all at once. Worse still, their body heat is cooking them from within.

Most intriguingly, the fishermen assembled to kill them, choose to leave the pseudorcas alone. No spears are angrily thrust into their sides. No unborn fetuses cut out of dying females only to be kicked around like a soccer ball. No, none of that. Like the pseudorcas themselves, the fishermen seem to comprehend this act of voluntary stranding as the cetacean equivalent to sepukku. So the Fuku fishermen, who will soon start the evil process of spearing tursiops (bottlenose dolphins) in a frenzy of anger, economic bitterness, and unmitigated blood lust, also seem to grasp the pseudorca stranding as a state of grace, an act worthy of their respect, and possibly an act of honor to be admired.

Watching the pseudorcas from a distance, the impression left upon a human observer is firstly, of futility and secondly of agony expressed in monumental physical terms. It is awe-inspiring, if for no other reason than the pseudorcas are up to twenty feet long. And so, one at a time, individual fishermen are quietly drawn away from their bloody work of spearing tursiops. In a brief journey of pilgrimage, they stroll down the beach to stand over the pseudorcas watching them in silence. When the fishermen first witnessed this act of stranding, and first tried to talk about it among themselves, they always described it with same kind of emotion they might use to describe a first visit to Mount Fuji. Wondrous. Awe-inspiring.

But after ten years of watching pseudorcas strand in the same purposeful manner, the fishermen now feel distinctly uncomfortable by what they discern. That first impression seemed premature. Standing right next to animal, there seems little or no expression of agony. But if not suffering, If not pain, if not pathos, then what is it that the pseudorcas are doing? And occasionally, one or another of the fishermen gets thrown way off balance by the inimitable way the animals force them into direct eye contact. It is a look and a consciousness that seems to say to them: won't you come inside and find some shelter from the storm. There is something deeply communal and, thus, quite unnerving about that look. Those who see it never forget it.

After ten years, the fishermen no longer know what it is they are seeing, or how to behave, or even how to talk about this troubling act among themselves. For that brief lingering moment when the covenant of eye contact is sealed, they know themselves to be the sole witness to a great mystery of nature. And in their hearts, they know that a pseudorca stranding is not a random act perpetrated by some animal "instinct-oid", but rather a very conscious and quite formalized cetacean ceremony of dying. Of course, this is a conclusion far beyond the fishermen's own ability to acknowledge, let alone understand.

So, finally, viewing done, pilgrimage completed, the fishermen walk back down the beach. They may lean on their spears for a few seconds, throw a small stone in the water, perhaps sigh a bit, and try not to show how they feel. And one at a time, the fishermen turn their back on what they have just witnessed, wade back out into the killing cove, and wrench their own minds and bodies back to the ugly task set before them.

The pseudorcas lie transfixed upon the sand; slowly drifting in-and-out-of-body on each new breath. The strong medicine of the glissando has taken hold. The circular pattern of breathing deepens, each location on the wheel of inhalation and exhalation now differentiates a subtle change of being. The resonating inhalation rises up from deep within the cavern of lungs; draws in warm, seering air; sends a signal to mind-in-body: come back, come back, come inside and deal with the faraway pain elucidated by body. Air is held inside and it permits the mind to drift out-of-body; now able to calmly educe each new wave of sensation as if they were all happening to somebody else. Then, a brief hint of some new dimension, still so distant, yet even now perceived as a kind of universal matrix beyond being. Then too quickly, pulled away; the urgency of exhalation is once again calling the mind back to body. The earth, the fire, the water, the air, return, return, return, return. Mind circles the body like a cyclone compressing the skin on all sides, and finally spirals back through the blowhole down into the channel between mind and lungs. PHooooo!! Exhalation.

Yet if this description of the stranding process seems irresponsible because it fails to ascribe "slow agony" to the process of cetacean crucifixion, let it also be known that cetaceans possess voluntary control over their breathing. They are able to expire by an act of will.

In fact, two of the younger animals are quickly betrayed by their own lack of *presence*. Immaturity causes a loss of self-control resulting in a corruption of the sacred geometry. The circle of breathing is severed. Once. Then several times. Agony. But rather than work to get themselves back on alignment with the evolving matrix, they choose instead, a quick-fix alternate route leading to oblivion. Exhalation. The mind drifts out-of-body, the vortex spins, sucking the mind up and up into the walls of the cyclone. But this time the mind refuses the bodies invitation to return. The circle is severed. Up the vortex and up. The colors of the spectrum. One tantalizing glimpse of the matrix in its entirety. Then White Light. Death.

Soon, the two young ones lie askew, on their sides, mouths open, eyes glazed, rocking back and forth in the gentle lap of the waves. Yet reposing on either side of the two corpses, their podmates instead choose life (or, to be more precise, the process of dying instead of death), and so also choose to probe deeply into their own ceremonial mastery of this Yoga of dying. It will last another full day.

Over the next eighteen hours, the sacred geometry leads each of the remaining initiates into an immanent state of grace. In-and-out-of-body pulsations seem to quicken now until the clear distinctions that formally defined each location on the circle-of-breathing begin to blur. The matrix beyond the circle has begun to define a new calculus, a new sensation, and it is much too powerful to resist any longer. And so, one at a time, the pseudorcas drift away. Gone.